

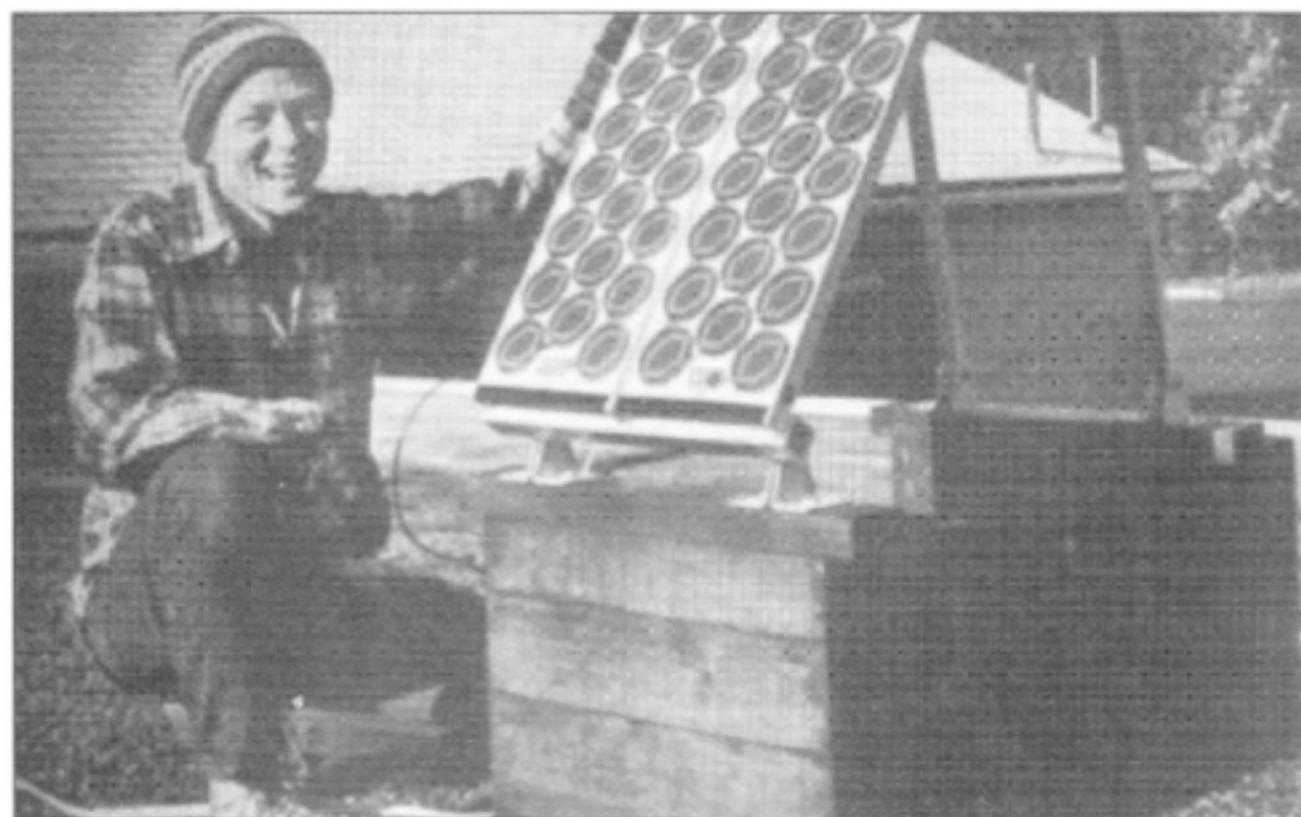
Solar Eternal Light

LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS The eternal light shining through a Star of David sculpture above Temple Emanuel's ark uses no utility power, no oil, or candles. But it's no miracle, either—two 9-by-13 inch solar panels on the temple's roof feed electricity to two 6-volt industrial storage batteries, which power the light. During the spring, summer, and fall, they even provide enough energy to illuminate the Torah-containing ark itself.

It's a perfect match between energy source and application, says Rabbi Everett Gendler: "The eternal light symbolizes the dependability of the divine and the sustainability of the source of life and energy.

Rabbi Everett Gendler on the roof of Temple Emanuel in Lowell, Massachusetts, with the silicon solar panels that have been generating power for the congregation's Eternal Light since 1978.

Photo credit: Arthur Pollock/The Lowell Sun.



This light shouldn't come from fossil fuels that disappear, nor from nuclear power that is life-threatening." He and a crew from his Lowell, Massachusetts, temple rigged up the system in time for the winter solstice in 1978. Ever since then, the congregation has held a special ceremony each December to celebrate the light. They even held a bar/bat mitzvah on its thirteenth "birthday."

The light is just one of several energy and environmental projects at the one-hundred-family temple. Rabbi Gendler marks the solstices and equinoxes with special services, and children plant and harvest rye and wheat each year. Members of the congregation also recently built a cold-frame greenhouse against the temple's south-facing side. They plan to grow greens throughout each winter to decorate the temple.

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